

CLAIMS

1. A telecommunications security device in the form of a separate unit stored in a lockable housing (46), the device comprising:

(i) a first connector (12) for connection to a telecommunications device (14, 15);

(ii) a second connector (16) for connection to a telecommunications line (18);

(iii) a switch (20, 21) having a normally closed position in which a signal pathway (22, 23) within the security device between the first connector (12) and the second connector (16) is enabled and an open position in which the signal pathway (22, 23) is interrupted;

(iv) a control device (24, 25) for controlling the position of the switch (20, 21);

(v) a programmable memory (26, 27) for storing allowed signal sequences and at least one authorised pass number;

(vi) a comparator (30) in operative connection with the control device (24, 25) for comparing signals on the pathway (22, 23) with the allowed stored signal sequences, the control device (24, 25) being adapted to open the switch (20, 21) when a signal on the pathway (22, 23) does not match one of the stored signal sequences;

(vii) a programmer (32) adapted to receive pass numbers and programming signals from a remote telecommunications device (52) via a telecommunications line connected to the second connector (16), the programmer (32) including an

authorised pass number recognition device (34) for comparing  
a received pass number with the authorised pass numbers  
stored in the memory (26, 27), and being adapted to program  
the memory (26, 27) only when an authorised pass number is  
received and

(viii) a battery (42) for powering the security device,  
wherein the control device (24, 25) is adapted to open the  
switch (20, 21) when no operative telecommunications device  
(14, 15) is connected to the first connector (12), thereby  
to save battery power;

2. A telecommunications security device according to  
claim 1, wherein the lock (48) of the housing (46) is key  
operated.

3. A telecommunications security device according to  
claim 1 or 2, wherein the control device (24, 25) is adapted  
to open the switch (20, 21) when the lockable housing (46)  
is unlocked.

4. A telecommunications security device according to  
any preceding claim, wherein the telecommunications device  
(15) is the modem of a computer, wherein the control device  
(25) is adapted to open the switch (21) when the modem is  
connected to an Internet service provider and signal  
sequences on the pathway (23) do not match one of the stored  
signal sequences.

5. A telecommunications security device according to any preceding claim, further comprising a third connector (49) for connecting the security device to a telephone handset (50), the third connector (49) being connected within the security device to the programmer (32), whereby the memory (26) can be further programmed by use of the handset (50).

6. A method of controlling a telecommunications device by the use of a security device in the form of a separate unit stored in a lockable housing (46), which device comprises:

(i) a first connector (12) connected to the telecommunications device (14, 15),

(ii) a second connector (16) connected to a telecommunications line (18),

(iii) a switch (20, 21) having a normally closed position in which a signal pathway (22, 23) within the security device between the first connector (12) and the second connector (16) is enabled and an open position in which the signal pathway (22, 23) is interrupted,

(v) a programmable memory (26, 27);

(vi) a programmer (32) adapted to program the programmable memory (26, 27); and

(vii) a battery (42) for powering the security device;

the method comprising:

storing at least one authorised pass number in said

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programmable memory (26, 27);

5 providing pass numbers and programming signals,  
including allowed signal sequences, from a remote  
telecommunications device (52) via the  
telecommunications line connected to the second  
connector to said programmer (32);

10 comparing a received pass number with the authorised  
pass number(s) stored in the memory (26, 27);

programming the memory (26, 27) with said allowed  
signal sequences only when an authorised pass number is  
received;

15 comparing signals on the pathway (22, 23) with the  
allowed stored signal sequences;

20 opening the switch (20, 21) when a signal on the  
pathway (22, 23) does not match one of the stored  
signal sequences; and

25 opening the switch (20, 21) when no operative  
telecommunications device (14, 15) is connected to the  
first connector (12), thereby to save battery power.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the switch (20,  
21) is opened when the lockable housing (46) is unlocked.

30 8. A method according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the  
security device further comprises a third connector (49) for  
connecting the security device to a telephone handset (50),  
the third connector (49) being connected within the security  
device to the programmer (32), the method comprising further  
35 programming the memory (26) by use of the handset (50).

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9. A method according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein the telecommunications device (15) is the modem of a computer, and the method comprises opening the switch (21) when the modem is connected to an Internet service provider and signal sequences on the pathway (23) do not match one of the stored signal sequences.

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